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## [I am Navy Medicine: 2015 BUMED HQ Sailor of the Year HM1 Jorge Castilleja](#)

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HM1 Castilleja in a Special ops camp outside of Kabul during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, 2011.

I was born in Baytown, Texas in 1985. I joined the Navy in 2005 because I wanted to see the world and I became a hospital corpsman because of their heritage.

I am a sailor by choice, a preventive medicine technician by trade, a hospital corpsman at heart, but most

importantly I am Navy Medicine.

Development in the Navy is all about the company you keep. I have been blessed to be part of some incredible teams throughout my years and continue to do so at my current command, Navy Environmental Preventive Medicine Unit in Rota Spain (NEPMU 7). All the personnel at my unit continue to set the bar not only as a public health asset for our area of operations, but also as great mentors and citizens outside of work. This is something that has really motivated me to better not only myself but also those around me through both professional and personal education to ensure that my skills are always useful to the Navy and I can continue to support my First Class Mess and command by involving myself extensively outside of work for Sailorization.

“What I like most about being a Preventive Medicine Technician and dealing with public health is that I have the privilege of helping individuals and/or their communities”



HM1 Castilleja (right center) outside the remains of the Queens Palace conducting assessments of medical facility capabilities with an Air Force Veterinarian and Army counterparts, on the boarder of Kabul going towards Jalalabad during Operation Enduring Freedom, Afghanistan, 2011.

I didn't get to where I am today by myself, and that's the most important thing to remember. My peers at NEPMU 7 are always out there doing great things, and being a part of that small cadre of Corpsman really has helped me grow as a leader. One trait that has helped set me apart from my peers is that I'm never afraid to step up to the plate. No matter how crazy and idea may be, anything that my leadership asks I am always willing to volunteer and help out. I've learned that great leaders lead by example and that's how I like to lead. There were times when I thought to myself "what was I thinking volunteering for this?", but I always felt good at the end of the day knowing that I can come to work and do something different every day and know that I'm setting a good example for my junior sailors.

I haven't always been a leader I was just the guy who was ready jump out of a plane, get my hands dirty, and get things done. Through the years my mentors have done everything in their power to put a boot to my rear and keep me on a good path. They taught me to channel that "Jump out of a plane" enthusiasm towards stepping forward and leading effectively. If I ever did something wrong or made a mistake they were always there, not to yell, but to make sure I acknowledged my mistakes and grew from them. These great mentors have taught me so much throughout my life and career.

One lesson my mentors instilled in me is that first impressions are critical because you only get one, and I want to give the impression that I have what it takes to be a leader and make the next rank. Anytime I meet someone for the first time, whether it's a recruit or the Navy surgeon general, I want them to know they have my full attention and I am there to assist in any capacity. To me that's what makes a true leader, the ability to fully engage with someone and really listen to what they have to say, and that's what I want to be remembered for.

"I love working and deploying with other branches because it gives me the opportunity to learn different skill sets and leadership styles"



"I never saw myself as a leader but I am glad my mentors saw something in me that I didn't and helped guide me to the path of something great. I hope someday I have as much positive influence and impact on a Junior Sailor's career that my mentors had on me."

My mentors always told me that to be successful I have to set achievable goals. Goals ensure there is always something to work towards and my short term goal right now is to complete my 2<sup>nd</sup> Master's degree, because honestly I'm tired of spending my nights and mornings doing homework, but in the long term I know it will open many doors for me. My long term goal is to retire from this great organization and become a professor at a local college where I can help to develop minds into great citizens and also to bore them with my sea stories.

Like I said before, I didn't get here by myself, and words can't express how thankful I am for everyone I've met throughout the years that has helped me along the way. I try to take a little bit from every conversation that I have, but one quote that always sticks with me is "it is what you make of it." If you mess up, learn from it, if you succeed, look back and see what you can do better next time. We are everywhere in the world at any time and in any situation and truly if you want to make that experience a great one, the change starts with you and ends with you, so get out there and enjoy it.

My name is Hospital Corpsman 1<sup>st</sup> Class (FMF) Jorge Castilleja, and I AM Navy Medicine.

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